

22. Apparatus for effecting the evaporation of a volatile solvent contained in a container, comprising sealed environment means containing an inert gas and connected to said container, a condensing device for absorbing or extracting solvent vapor, and pump means for recirculating the inert gas via the condensing device, whereby solvent vapor entrained in the inert gas is absorbed or extracted in the condensing device.

23. Apparatus according to claim 22 in which said container has an upper end into which the inert gas is directly returned.

24. Apparatus according to claim 23 further comprising nozzle means through which the inert gas is directed into the container directly onto the surface of the solvent in the container.

25. Apparatus according to claim 22 further comprising a pressure control means for introducing or extracting inert gas, in order to maintain a predetermined pressure in the recirculating system.

26. Apparatus according to claim 22 further comprising gas reservoir means in which inert gas is stored under pressure for reuse as required, and pressure controlling means for limiting the pressure of the gas leaving the reservoir means to a desired level.

27. Apparatus according to claim 22 in which the container is mounted in a vortex evaporator.

28. Apparatus according to claim 22 in which the inert gas is nitrogen.

29. Apparatus according to claim 22 further comprising heater means provided in the recirculating system downstream of said condensing device.

30. Apparatus according to claim 9 in which said container comprises an open top for accommodation in said sealed environment means.

31. Apparatus according to claim 9 comprising a plurality of solvent containers connected to a manifold through which the inert gas is recirculated.

32. Apparatus according to claim 30 in which the manifold is divided into two compartments, one being connected to a pump for extracting the mixture of the inert gas and solvent vapor and the other feeding recirculated inert gas from the condensing or absorbing device.

Remarks

The examiner's reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the replacement claims above and comments which follow.

Replacement claims have been provided above for consideration by the examiner. Claims 1, through 4 have been cancelled as being directed to the non-elected invention. Claims 5 through 20 have been replaced with new claims 22 through 32, and for the examiner's convenience in comparing the new claims to the former claims, claims 22 through 25 correspond, respectively,